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UNCLAS CAIRO 004023

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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT  
FOR NEW YORK'S OLYMPIC BID

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

(SBU) During a May 25 meeting with the Charge, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit shared his views on New York City's chances for winning the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) vote to become the host-city for the 2012 Olympic Games. Aboul Gheit said he had recently sent Egyptian Olympic Committee Chairman General Thabet a personal letter expressing his strong support for New York's bid. He felt New York City ("my city," he said emphatically) would unfortunately lose out to Paris for three reasons: first, U.S. travel restrictions on foreigners were simply too difficult and scrutinizing; second, Aboul Gheit felt that IOC members would want to "tweak" the U.S. by voting against its bid on political grounds; and third, Paris already had all the facilities in place. Citing numerous stories of friendliness and generosity of New Yorkers and Americans that he had encountered personally while living in New York, Aboul Gheit hoped his prediction on the outcome of the IOC vote was incorrect. (Note: Aboul Gheit served as Egypt's United Nations permrep from 1999-2004. End note.)

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GRAY